



The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is expanding the scope of its programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement to include preparation of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and/or Natural Community Conservation Plan. These tools can be used to promote long-term habitat protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species.

Why Develop an HCP?

The purpose of CALFED's Habitat Conservation Plan is to provide comprehensive, long-term conservation strategies that will allow for the recovery of any listed species (e.g., threatened and/or endangered plants or animals) and not contribute to the need to list additional species under the Federal Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act. Under such a plan, participants could be assured that, in the event of unforeseen circumstances affecting those species, no additional land, funds or restrictions on covered Program actions will be required.

What Is an NCCP?

The Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act was passed in 1991 authorizing the California Department of Fish and Game to develop a program to protect and conserve plant and wildlife populations and their habitats. The goal of an NCCP is to conserve long-term viable populations of the State's native animal and plant species, and their habitats in landscape units large enough to ensure their continued existence.

An NCCP is a plan for the conservation of natural resources that takes a landscape or ecosystem approach and encouraged cooperation between private and government interests. The plan identifies a conservation strategy that will provide for the regional or area-wide conservation of plants, animals and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity.

What's the Difference Between an HCP and an NCCP?

While an NCCP and a federal HCP may ultimately be identical, the final plan is reached from different starting points. The HCP purpose must ensure that the effects of the authorized incidental take will be adequately minimized and mitigated and that listed species are not jeopardized. (Typically, it has a species focus and is not required to address regional conservation needs.) The purpose of an NCCP is to develop and implement a conservation strategy that provides for the long-term conservation of a species through the preservation of the ecosystem on which they depend. The objective is long-term conservation utilizing a variety of means to accomplish this purpose. (It is a conservation plan with an

ecosystem/landscape focus.) The regional conservation focus is the basic premise behind the development of the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP).

Assurances

Assurances are an important component to the solution developed by the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. Each alternative, a set of actions to address problems facing the Bay-Delta system, developed by CALFED includes a package of assurances. Assurances are policy-level actions and institutional guarantees that each alternative can successfully operate as intended in the future for both the ecosystem and other water users.

An HCP can provide assurances to non-Federal members of CALFED under the ESA and the Department of Interior's "No Surprises Policy" that species adequately addressed in a properly functioning HCP will not seek additional mitigation except under extraordinary circumstances. This assurance then can become a part of the overall assurances package being developed for the CALFED program. An NCCP can also provide assurances that measures sufficient to conserve the specific species are addressed in the plan and that no additional mitigation will be required except in extraordinary circumstances.

Want To Know More?

For further information on how you can participate in the effort to restore the environment and water management of the California Bay-Delta system, contact: CALFED, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA 95814 ph: (916) 657-2666 Fax: (916) 654-9780 Public Information Line (916) 654-9924, Website: <http://calfed.ca.gov>